

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 250255  
ORIGIN EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 OES-07 HEW-04 CIAE-00 INR-07  
NSAE-00 INRE-00 /031 R

DRAFTED BY EUR/SOV:MJWILKINSON:PDHUGHES:EM  
APPROVED BY EUR/SOV:MGARRISON  
OES/APT/BMP:WWALSH (INFO)  
HEW/OIH:RDFISCHER

-----098920 190135Z /64

O 190045Z OCT 77  
FM SECSTATE WASHDC  
TO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 250255

E.O. 11652: XGDS

TAGS: TGEN, TBIO, TPHY, UR, US

SUBJECT: DIOMEDE ISLAND HEALTH COOPERATION

REFS: (A) MOSCOW 15184; (B) STATE 246521; (C) MOSCOW  
14281; (D) STATE 177538

1. DEPARTMENT PREFERS THAT EMBASSY RESPOND TO SOVIET  
NOTE (REFTEL C) AS FOLLOWS (SALUTATION OMITTED):

(BEGIN TEXT)

THE EMBASSY WISHES TO EMPHASIZE THAT THE US IS PREPARED TO  
CONSIDER EMERGENCY EVACUATION OPERATIONS WITHOUT ANY  
REQUIREMENTS FOR USE OF SOVIET TECHNICAL RESOURCES OR  
PERSONNEL ON BIG DIOMEDE (OSTOV RATMANOVA). WE BELIEVE  
THAT THE MERE AVAILABILITY OF SPACE ON OR AROUND BIG  
DIOMEDE MAY IN CERTAIN CIRCUMSTANCES PERMIT AN EVACUATION  
WITH USE OF HELICOPTER OR SKID-EQUIPPED LIGHT PLANE THAT  
WOULD NOT OTHERWISE BE POSSIBLE.

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A RECENT CASE ILLUSTRATES THE RELEVANCE AND URGENCY OF  
HUMANITARIAN CONSIDERATIONS. DURING THE PERIOD SEPTEMBER  
29 TO OCTOBER 1, 1977, A THIRTEEN-YEAR-OLD NATIVE MALE  
RESIDENT OF LITTLE DIOMEDE ISLAND SUFFERED A SEVERE ATTACK

OF APPENDICITIS. ALTHOUGH AT A CRITICAL POINT, THE BOY

WAS EVACUATED BY HELICOPTERS, THE OUTCOME WAS IN DOUBT UNTIL THE LAST MINUTE; UNFAVORABLE ICE AND WIND CONDITIONS PREVENTED THE HELICOPTERS FROM LANDING ON LITTLE DIOMEDE OR THE ICE SURROUNDING IT AND THE ILL CHILD HAD TO BE LIFTED BY ROPE TO HOVERING HELICOPTER. AVAILABILITY OF BIG DIOMEDE ALTERNATIVES WOULD HAVE REDUCED THE DANGER OF THIS EVACUATION.

IN LIGHT OF THE FOREGOING, THE EMBASSY REQUESTS THAT THE MINISTRY AUTHORIZE FURTHER TECHNICAL, LOGISTIC DISCUSSIONS TO ASCERTAIN WHETHER EVACUATION OPERATIONS MIGHT BE UNDERTAKEN WITHOUT USE OF SOVIET TECHNICAL RESOURCES OR PERSONNEL. THE EMBASSY SUGGESTS THAT THE JOINT HEALTH COMMITTEE MEETING IN WASHINGTON, OCTOBER 24-28, IS AN APPROPRIATE FORUM FOR SUCH FURTHER EXPLORATORY DISCUSSIONS AND THE US DELEGATION TO THAT MEETING WILL BE PREPARED TO PRESENT MORE DETAILED INFORMATION ON THE MATTER.

IN CLOSING THE EMBASSY WOULD AGAIN UNDERSCORE HUMANITARIAN CONSIDERATIONS AND REITERATE ITS VIEW THAT COOPERATION ON THIS PROBLEM WOULD BE AN EXEMPLARY COMPLEMENT TO THE SUCCESSES OF EXISTING JOINT HEALTH PROGRAMS AND THE RECORD OF EMERGENCY SERVICES RENDERED TO NUMEROUS SOVIET SEAMEN IN RECENT YEARS.  
(END TEXT)

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2. DEPARTMENT APPRECIATES EMBASSY COMMENTS ON ORIGINAL TEXT AND HAS INCORPORATED WELL-TAKEN POINTS RE COAST GUARD ROLE AND TIGHTER WORDING IN SOME SECTIONS. HOWEVER, DEPARTMENT AND HEW HAVE CAREFULLY CONSIDERED TONE AND CONTENT OF BASIC APPROACH AND AT THIS JUNCTURE FIND IT BEST TO PROCEED IN RELATIVELY LOWER-KEY OF OUR INITIAL PROPOSAL. VANCE

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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
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**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** HEALTH, AGREEMENTS, INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION  
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**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 22 May 2009  
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**TAGS:** TGEN, TBIO, TPHY, UR, US  
**To:** MOSCOW  
**Type:** TE  
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**Review Markings:**  
Margaret P. Grafeld  
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**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009